



**1.0 Location:** Brookside Gardens, 1800 Glenallan Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland

**2.0 Meeting Purpose:** To engage and educate the public about the County's goals for watershed restoration and protection and to review current watershed conditions in the Anacostia, Cabin John, Patuxent and Rock Creek watersheds.

**3.0 Participants:** Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection (MCDEP) sponsored the meeting with technical presentations from MCDEP and Biohabitats, Inc. and Capuco Consulting Services, Inc. Biohabitats, Inc. is the lead firm of the consultant team working on strategy development. The meeting was facilitated by Resolve. The audience included concerned citizens, members from watershed organizations and other non-governmental organizations, as well as staff from MCDEP and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

**4.0 Welcome and Introductions:** The meeting was called to order at approximately 1:15 p.m. with a welcoming from Meo Curtis of MCDEP who introduced the MCDEP and consultant staff present at the meeting. She presented the meeting agenda and reviewed the purpose for the meeting. The agenda called for technical presentations from MCDEP, Biohabitats, and Capuco Consulting followed by breakout sessions to examine four of the county's watersheds. The meeting would then be concluded with an additional question and answer period.

**5.0 Overview of Montgomery County Stormwater Programs and Review Activities for New Permit:** Meo Curtis of MCDEP continued with an introductory slideshow explaining the MS4 permit, the need for restoration and stormwater management in the county, and details behind the MS4 permit requirements. She highlighted how Montgomery County must meet water resource goals and stormwater programs. She also introduced the new and enhanced requirements in the MS4 permit that must be addressed through the Watershed Restoration Implementation Strategy – elaborating on the restoration goals:

- Runoff Management
- Pollutant Management
- Trash Reduction
- Stream Resources Protection

**6.0 Current Conditions in Montgomery County and Framework to Address Next Steps:** Ted Brown of Biohabitats then presented the project scope, consultant team, and a technical presentation. The purpose of the presentation was to introduce the current stream resource conditions in four of the County's watersheds, discuss approaches to improve the watersheds, and present different approaches that could be implemented. Following his presentation, stakeholders presented a variety of comments, many in the form of questions. MCDEP and the consultant team offered suggestions on how these comments may be addressed in the implementation plan. The questions and comments are listed below:

- What is the median water quality criteria?



- Why does Cabin John have TMDLs on bacteria? What type of bacteria and where does it come from?
- Is the group I work with, that invests in restoration and picks up trash, considered a BMP?
- Does the County use the EPA definition of BMP?
- What kind of bacteria are we talking about?
- What is the substance of the stormwater permit?
- Is there a “gold standard” for TMDLs, for example, with respect to bacteria? (The questioner represents West Lake Pond which feeds into Cabin John.)
- Are all of you County employees? What is purpose of this meeting?
- Why is this happening now?
- Can you better explain the permit and exactly what is meant by water quality and quantity?
- We don’t know where to go for information. We need a generalized database for general information.
- How do you determine impervious percentage?
- Is insecticide in the permit regulations?
- What are the unmanaged areas on the map? They are not parks.

Carrie Capuco of Capuco Consulting Services, Inc. then continued with a presentation and discussion on the current stewardship outreach programs in the county and their potential ability to contribute significantly to the permit implementation. Most attendees had heard of four or more of the current county programs and said they are worthwhile but short of what is needed. Many had participated in at least some of these. Some said the programs are fantastic. Storm drain marking was a touchstone with several people as was RainScapes. It was mentioned that there are other non-stewardship opportunities managed by other County agencies -- not DEP. And there was agreement that there seems to be less participation in trash clean-up and reforestation/tree planting. Weed Warriors seemed to have a lot of participation.

Ms. Capuco then introduced a case study presentation by Friends of Sligo Creek. The presenters discussed their outreach program for Rainscapes and the problems in the Sligo Creek. They explained that they had obtained two grants – from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (CBT) and the Takoma Foundation to conduct education via neighborhood walk-throughs. They also did training sessions with CASA de Maryland. CASA participants also conducted community installations. This was a way to bring in new stakeholders in the immigrant community and to create or train for Green jobs.

Juliana Birkhoff of Resolve then concluded the large-group portion of the meeting and directed participants to break out groups for discussions of specific watersheds. Because there were no participants from the Patuxent watershed, the participants were divided into three breakout groups - one each for the Anacostia, Cabin John, and Rock Creek watersheds.



## **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS BY MAJOR WATERSHED**

### **Anacostia**

Existing Conditions: The group reviewed maps and a handout summarizing the current conditions in the watershed.

Countywide Watershed Restoration Goals: Review of countywide watershed restoration goals. There was general agreement on the four goals – Runoff Management, Pollutant Management, Trash Reduction, and Stream Resources Protection.

Preliminary Watershed Restoration Objectives: Review of the Anacostia restoration objectives that relate to the countywide goals occurred. There was general agreement on the seven objectives:

- Reduce trash to meet the Trash Treaty requirements
- Reduce sediment to meet the TMDL
- Improve instream habitat
- Reduce bacteria to meet TMDL
- Reduce phosphorus to meet TMDL
- Reduce nutrients to meet TMDL
- Maintain biological condition in Upper Paint Branch and Northwest Branch

Other objectives mentioned included:

- Reduce runoff volume, especially for smaller more frequent storms
- Restore stream base flows

Potential Restoration Opportunities:

#### *Stormwater Retrofits*

- Wheaton Branch and other areas along Sligo Creek are controlled by ponds but upstream of the ponds are often very badly impacted.
- Stormwater facilities tend to be downstream; they need to be located at the start of the source so they can affect everything downstream.
- Green streets initiative is needed to address road runoff.
- Need more practices in Wheaton Plaza. Do upstream source control prior to doing stream restoration.
- Henderson Avenue – between Wheaton Park and Georgia Avenue - also appears in CIP as curb and gutter project. Want more coordination between DOT and DEP. Wheaton Regional Park.
- South of Wheaton Plaza, concerned about proposed additions at Wheaton Plaza. Most of the water management is being handled underground. How can we get more pervious surfaces in a business area? And more green roofs? Is there anything that can be done in this direction?

#### *Erosion and Sediment Control*

- Construction site runoff is completely out of control – 5ft of excess sediment.

#### *Information Transfer*



- Need watershed condition maps on the County website. It is effective to have information that we need to know to help with BMPs near our homes. This information needs to be made interactive, possibly with GIS, on a public website.

#### *Water Quality*

- Bennington outfall coming from downtown Silver Spring – consistently high pollution levels.
- Maple Avenue outfall is a pollution source

#### *Stakeholder Engagement*

- Bel Pre creek – garden variety outreach club – find the right people in Leisure World to contact. Need education at this place, highly political. Retirement community – good stakeholder group to engage.

#### Outreach Program Awareness:

- Use recycling outreach methods as a model for success

#### Outreach Support Needed:

- Water quality monitoring program with Audubon Naturalist Society
- Need to connect with enforcement – when there is no cost or penalty to those who litter, we all suffer. One solution has to be to capture this cost and ticket people for littering. They can give the tickets, those regulations exist, but the police won't give those tickets. Extra benefit of using litter tickets as probable cause.
  - Solid waste inspectors from the DEP should do better job of enforcing existing ordinances.
- Business improvement districts are currently only in Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Wheaton. Establishing other business improvement districts in other dense areas can help with the control of trash and litter by establishing a funding source.
  - Generic piece of county legislation that encourages business improvement districts to be created and makes it easy to do so.
- Broken window syndrome – trash contributes to crime.
  - Watershed and other community groups could hire off duty police officers to give tickets for littering. There could be a grant program to fund and support this issue. It is also potentially self supporting, as money comes into the County from those tickets. Fines of \$250-\$1,500 could be levied on public and private property.
- Litter hotline
  - Businesses are responsible for picking up litter on their business premises. Encourage use of hotline to report offenders and have swift enforcement
- Citizens want a bigger role in policy development. The county should ask us specifically about the policies.
- Rename stormwater sewers to reduce the confusion between sources and mechanisms.
- County should focus repairs, retrofits and funds on increasing the visibility through highly visible project selection. Stormwater pond retrofits are not so visible.
- Signage would be great! Choose obvious BMPs.
- Environmental hotline for citizens to call that results in action.
- Educate people about who they should call with specific concerns and complaints.
- Ensure better follow up for reporting concerns and problems.



- Water quality management program.
- Pet waste management and education.
- Featured speaker program and make different people available to come speak to organizations – potentially use the speakers groups.

Key Stakeholder Groups in the Watershed:

- Outreach to green Wheaton development group.
- Contact folks who were not here from:
  - Sandy Spring Friends School
  - Other groups in Olney that have not yet been contacted.
  - Churches
  - Bicyclists
  - Scouts
- More accountability for Montgomery County DOT
- Get DPS involved, water quality services
- HOAs
- Green businesses who stand to gain from retrofitting projects
- Nurseries
- Architects
- Reaching out to the boards of education from the bottom up so that it is incorporated as part of the curriculum as environmental stewardship and also as community service requirements.
- Faith groups and institutions
- Green roof suppliers

Most Effective Ways to Communicate with the Different Stakeholder Groups and How to Engage Them:

- Use MCPS to impact the system and change their curriculum.
  - Use Baltimore County as an example
  - Montgomery County Schools has a partnership with Audubon Naturalist Society
  - Green Kids program with Montgomery County Schools
  - Public school partnership programs need to be expanded and studied to increase their effectiveness.
- Don't have a plan that says the county will do this, and citizens can do this... instead partnership approach where county and citizens are working closely together so that there is accountability and it is closely monitored.
- Going to those groups wherever they are; meeting them at their place.



## **Cabin John**

**Existing Conditions:** The group reviewed maps and a handout depicting the current conditions in the watershed.

**Countywide Watershed Restoration Goals:** Review of countywide watershed restoration goals. There was general agreement on the four goals – Runoff Management, Pollutant Management, Trash Reduction, and Stream Resources Protection. The participants seemed to agree with the restoration goals. No watershed specific objectives were added.

## **Restoration Opportunities**

Potential Restoration Opportunities:

- A large wet pond that requires additional attention
- A natural stream bed in the Timberlawn community
  - Scott Davies, President of the Timberlawn Homeowners Association, pointed out that if the stream is left unattended, debris piles up and blocks the flow of water. He said citizens have been cleaning it out.
- Bio-retention area in Greenwich Park (Huntington Parkway, Georgetown Road) was installed in October 2009 by the DEP and Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission.
- Rights of Way (maintained by private landowners but owned by the County). There is potential to naturalize them.

**Outreach Program Awareness:** Six participants completed the questionnaire that listed 17 programs. While they were aware of all but one program (Trash Free Potomac Talkback Line), only one or two people are now participating in each program or think the programs should be expanded. People said they were already:

- picking up trash
- planting trees
- doing vegetation management
- re-stocking fish
- pond aeration
- managing “geese chasing”

## **Outreach Support Needed:**

- Is there a program to identify all institutional parking lots and do outreach to them?
- Have more meetings like this.
- More signage (signs to ID main stems and tributaries).
- Walk through neighborhoods with homeowners associations to ID needs/possible best practices.
- Share FAQ's about how to deal with invasive plants, particularly with HOAs.
- A list of 20-30 FAQs (Scott Davies, President of the Timberlawn Homeowners Association, offered to help compile the FAQs).



- Create a “green pages” for specific services, such as certified mechanics or experts in wet pond maintenance.
- Conduct outreach to people who enjoy trailheads and ask them to be stewards of particular trails.
- Scott Davies (President of the Timberlawn Homeowners Association) proposed that someone from DEP walk through his neighborhood and give the residents suggestions about what they should do and then do the same for other HOAs as well. He was surprised to have never been engaged by the County on watershed issues despite his many years in the role of HOA President. He said he attend larger regional HOA President conferences and has never seen County reps educating them about watershed issues.
- If there was a list of FAQs, then community associations could be held to those standards.
- Incentivize homeowners associations/landowners to have sustainable/organic landscaping.
- Incentivize Rainscapes program, but first better educate the public about how to do it without flooding their home.
- Educate public about how to have a “green household,” including “green” landscaping.
- Create a green certification for households.
- Create a green certification for businesses (for example, they shouldn’t get the certification if they use plastic bags).
- Educate public about what they can/cannot do on public rights of way.
- Educate public about the costs of not managing stormwater.
- Notify people that they are at a stream site, even if they can’t see it.
- Do outreach by focusing on homeowners associations (for example, go to their annual meetings).
- Create a “green home owners association;” people would be admitted if they met certain standards. Also would make HOAs using green practices more attractive and give them a competitive advantage and raise the value of the properties.
- Commission a study about how making a home/property greener can increase the value of a house.
- Publicize the results of the study, so people understand that they’ll get a higher home value rating if they do certain things.
- Reach out to the “Friends of Cabin John Watershed” group (the group has been inactive recently but used to be very active).
- Create four blogs on the website (one for each watershed) which will be a good way to communicate (Meo Curtis mentioned that a problem with blogs is the need for maintenance and screening).
- Educate public on getting away from using plastic bottles and bags (could be on an FAQ list).



- Have an e-mail blast, that people can subscribe to, which will include the type of information we're talking about today.
- Conduct outreach to NGO's, citizen groups (you can get lots of people applying for grants to do little projects).
- Conduct outreach to trade associations.
- Conduct outreach to corporations (corporate social responsibility offices).
- Get in touch with teachers at schools and community colleges (Montgomery College) about having student service hours be related to the environment.
- DEP should ensure interagency involvement in stormwater management.
- DEP should be involved in approval process for new development so that the new developments don't make things worse.
- People said they hadn't done the following but wanted to:
  - conservation landscaping
  - remove invasive plants from property
  - monitoring (for example, go the Montgomery Mall and check the origin of trash and chemicals that are ending up in the water).
  - outreach to neighborhood businesses

#### Key Stakeholder Groups in the Watershed:

- Friends of Cabin John Watershed
- HOAs in Cabin John
- Property Mgmt Companies in Cabin John
- Landscape Companies and Designers (none specific)
- Master Gardeners
- Bethesda Green (may not be in watershed though)
- Hiking and Biking groups (none specifically mentioned)
- IWLA
- Soccer organizations (people utilizing the fields)

#### Most Effective Ways to Communicate with the Different Stakeholder Groups and How to Engage Them:

- Encourage a mandatory Environmental component to Community service projects for High School students
- Go out to where people recreate/congregate (again, nothing specific)
- Have County staff meet with HOAs and other property mgmt entities regularly to educated them on best practices

#### Rock Creek

Existing Conditions: The group reviewed maps and a handout depicting the current conditions in the watershed.



Countywide Watershed Restoration Goals: Review of countywide watershed restoration goals. There was general agreement on the four goals – Runoff Management, Pollutant Management, Trash Reduction, and Stream Resources Protection.

Preliminary Watershed Restoration Objectives:

They wanted to add the following specific watershed restoration objectives:

- Restore base-flow conditions
- Restore to natural hydrologic flow
- Restore to natural-forested condition (increase transpiration)
- Expand the SPA
- Avoid restoring and destroying at the same time

Potential Restoration Opportunities:

- Southwest portion of Westfield Wheaton Mall and large areas of impervious surface with containment underground for 10-year event
- Drying up of streambeds resulting in change in biologic integrity
- Burying of springs and seasonal streams
- ICC northern slice
- Increased sedimentation – north of Pierce Mill
- Water main breaks
- P&Z codes
- WSSC sewerline repair and replacement
- Frequency of issuance of permit waivers

Outreach Program Awareness:

People said they were already participating in:

- Rainscapes
- Composting
- Grasscycling
- Picking up trash
- Planting trees

Outreach Support Needed:

- Dog waste disposal sites along trails
- Education about using plastic bags for dog waste
- Insertion of watershed objectives into sector plans
- Reduction of frequency of permit issuance
- Tree education and free plantings
- Protection and replacement of street trees
- Rock Creek extreme cleanup (Alice Ferguson Foundation project)



- Stream stewards idea: FORCE (Friends of Rock Creek environment) got a grant for their stream team
- Partnering strategies that pair safety efforts with “stream watchers”
- Playing field trash disposal
- Trash disposal site maintenance “empty the cans”
- Fines linking to true cost
- Business outreach to large corporations regarding parking lot runoff (Fitzgerald Automotive touts itself as a green dealer)
- Home certification, i.e., Takoma Park

Key Stakeholder Groups in the Watershed:

- Planning & Zoning
- Permit enforcement
- Audubon Green Kids program
- School administrators
- Commercial opportunities: Wild Bird Centers
- National Capital Area Boy Scouts of America
- Girl Scouts of National Capital
- Bethesda Green
- Poolesville Green
- Immigrant groups – soccer leagues
- Landscaping companies (Ray Brothers)
- Force nurseries to stop selling invasive plants
- Renew Montgomery (builders group)
- Wal-Mart & Home Depot employees
- Montgomery College
  - Takoma Park Campus Amanda Truitt for native plants
  - Building program in construction technology
  - Germantown Campus (Esat Attikan is the recommended professor and another whose last name is Parmo)
- Master Gardeners
- Churches: Bradley Hills (one person has list of all churches in the watershed)
- Northwest Earth Institute healthy planet coffee discussion
- Alice Ferguson Foundation
- Mulching companies

Most Effective Ways to Communicate with the Different Stakeholder Groups and How to Engage Them:

- Ongoing contractor certification



**7.0 Public Comment:** The meeting was then turned over to Juliana Birkhoff from Resolve for a concluding discussion with questions and comments from the audience. The discussion lasted approximately 35 minutes, followed by a brief summary and next steps from Meo Curtis. The meeting adjourned at 4:45pm. A list of the general questions and comments is included below:

- I saw BMPs identified on the map that I didn't know about.
- Educational signs would be nice.
- This reinforced that there is not a lot of cooperation among county, state, etc. There should be an overlay of integrated management programs. Like today, why isn't the planning department here?
- Everybody needs to be involved because it is so complex.
- Fines for infractions are insignificant. They build it into their construction cost.
- We need to reach out to more community groups.
- County-wide, we need to acknowledge achievement for communities. Use the carrot, not the stick. Tout the community as a Green standard. This could increase property values.
- Reach out to the Board of Education. Make Stewardship a part of community service. Audubon already has the Green Kids program. As part of the No Child Left Inside legislation, let's make environmental education mandatory.
- Go to the soccer fields to reach immigrant communities. We have to reach out to them; they will not come on their own.
- Create a featured speaker program to make speakers available for community meetings.
- Citizen groups and watershed groups should form stronger partnerships with county government, particularly DEP, setting specific watershed objectives to help spread the burden to accomplish the retrofits.
- County DOT does not operate with sufficient accountability. We must develop objectives each year for DOT and let them know we will hold them (and DPS) accountable.
- March 10 is the hearing for the bag bill. This will make people aware. It should be managed in a positive way. We can use that as an educational tool.

Summary of note cards: No note cards were submitted.



## Meeting Participants

Count was approximately 41 people, excluding the project team.

The final count from the watershed map included:

Anacostia: 13  
Cabin John: 8  
Rock Creek: 9  
Patuxent: 2

### Others

Little Falls: 1  
Watts : 1  
Potomac (Rock Run): 1  
Outside County: 6

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# Summary of Public Meeting on the Montgomery County Watershed Restoration Implementation Strategy Saturday March 6, 2010

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## **Meeting Agenda:**

1:10-1:20	Welcome and Introductions
1:20-1:30	Overview of Montgomery County Stormwater Management and Regulatory Requirements
1:30-1:50	Current Conditions in Montgomery County and Framework to Address Next Steps
1:50-2:20	Public Input
2:20-2:30	Break
2:30-4:00	Breakout Groups
4:00-4:10	Break
4:10-4:45	Summary and Next Steps
4:45	Adjourn